

Mr. Speaker, I am planning on supporting the rule and the underlying bill, but I am concerned that we are not taking full advantage of the opportunity in the military construction arena. One of the greatest threats to national security in this country and worldwide is the disease, poverty, pollution, unrest and misery that is produced. We have serious problems here at home that is part of the legacy of 60 years of war, amongst them some of our production facilities at Hanford, Rocky Flats. We have chemical weapons, toxic waste and unexploded ordinance.

One of the most powerful tools of government to lead is to lead by example. I think one of the ways the government can do that is to follow the rules and model the behavior that we want the rest of society to follow. One of the biggest, richest and most visible opportunities for the United States to lead by example in ways to promote livable communities is dealing with the military.

The Department of Defense manages the world's largest dedicated infrastructure. It covers 40,000 square miles, a physical plant worth over \$500 billion. The bill before us could give many opportunities. One that we see in the Department of Defense is on-base housing programs. The military housing privatization initiative that is being continued is an example to allow funding. It allows the service to partner with civilian developers to build and renovate family housing on military installations, to convey housing units to private companies, while retaining the land in Federal hands, to provide military members with the same type of housing that the people that they defend have the opportunity to live in, and create communities that look, feel and work like those outside a military base. But, unfortunately, we are losing an opportunity here for the Federal Government to be a better partner with the local communities in which they are situated.

I would hope that as we move forward with this through the legislative process and in subsequent years, that we reverse the presumption that we have a situation where the Department of Defense plays by the local land use and planning rules of the local community.

For instance, we saw in 1999 the Army proposed to develop a 700,000 square foot private shopping center on Fort Hood that would have severely affected the surrounding business community in Collin, Texas. We have an opportunity here to avoid having the Federal Government impose massive highway and infrastructure requirements on States and communities without their being able to realize any offsetting tax benefits.

I note that on the Senate side, in Section 8168 of the Defense Appropriations Act, it permits

the City of San Antonio to exercise these responsibilities for the Brooks Air Force Base Demonstration Efficiency Project.

This should not be the exception. This should be the rule. We should be cooperating with local communities, we should be playing by their planning and zoning rules, we should be leading by example.

I am pleased that the bill has many other positive things, a 72 percent increase in the cleaning up of the environmental problems associated with base closings, but I hope that the committee will work with us to make sure that the military is a better partner with local communities to provide livability wherever our facilities are located.